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July 26, 2011

Chairman Julius Genachowski
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

RE: Commission's 11-65 docket

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

On behalf of the Gulf Coast Business Council, I am writing in reference to AT&T's proposal to merge with T-Mobile USA.

The Council consists of over 250 business and community leaders who represent Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson counties on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. We focus on regional public policy issues that are critical to the Gulf Coast's future, including workforce development, tourism, and land use.

The current economic climate is still far from robust. We have reached the second year of what some call a "recovery," but many of our members and their constituencies tell us that there are few signs of growth in the traditional indicators, such as new business formation, available credit, and, most important, jobs.

In these conditions, the government should encourage economic development. One way is to make improvements to infrastructure to introduce efficiencies, ideas, and opportunities for entrepreneurs, current businesses, and consumers. In making such improvements, one looks for an economic "multiplier" effect, in which the initial investment spurs multiple new investments by organizations and individuals, creating a climate of prosperity that benefits as many people as possible.

The most obvious historical example of this was the creation of the interstate highway system a half-century ago. When I look back upon the scattered assortment of rural and county roads, I see a parallel to our mobile broadband communications and data networks. These networks are certainly functional for the many phones and data devices that connect to it, but they are still evolving with regard to speed, functionality, and reliability. I also believe we have yet to see what can ultimately be achieved over these networks, particularly in the areas of education and medicine.

The short-term effect of strategic improvements to mobile broadband networks will be job development resulting from the need for skilled workers to make the improvements. It is clear that the U.S. government does not have the resources necessary at the present time to fund this endeavor. Instead, we should rely on the private sector, which has the capacity for the risk and reward involved.

As it was with railroads in the 19th century, the best way of achieving investment and improvement is through mergers. This is because the cost of creating new networks at this stage of the evolution of wireless, high-speed technology is prohibitive. Rather, successful networks need to combine their strengths, knowledge, and infrastructure to move to the next generation of technology.

For these reasons, we are enthusiastic about a merger between AT&T and T-Mobile. This will create new investment, new job opportunities, and new ways of using communications and information to move the U.S. economy in unanticipated, but welcome directions.

We respectfully ask that you support this merger.

Sincerely,

GULF COAST BUSINESS COUNCIL

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jack Norris", written in a cursive style.

Jack Norris, President

cc: Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Robert McDowell
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn